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SELF, SELF-DISORDER AND BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

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For Dan Zahavi

If everybody knows now, at least among the Anglo-Saxon psychiatrists, the acronym E.A.S.E. (Examination of Anomalous Self-Experience) and J. Parnas' work,¹ it doesn't mean that we understand exactly what is at stake in this «semi-structured qualitative and semi-quantitative psychometric checklist to examine anomalies of subjective self-experience».² What is what we call the self-experience?

¹ Parnas, born 1950, is a Danish psychiatrist. Professor of psychiatry at the University of Copenhagen, he is a co-founder of the Center for Subjectivity Research, directed presently by D. Zahavi. He worked on the creation of the Examination of Anomalous Self-Experience (E.A.S.E.).

² To be more precise, we quote the presentation of EASE by its promoters: «Anomalous subjective experiences, described since early 20th century, are thought to be intrinsic to schizophrenia and considered as constituting the phenotypic validity anchor of the schizophrenia spectrum concept. Although neglected in modern psychiatry, due to the dominating behavioristic approach, they nevertheless have been thoroughly investigated in continental European psychiatry, where it has been shown that their presence antedates future psychosis. Anomalous experiences of self-awareness (self-disorders) are a sub-group of subjective pathology. Self-disorders are not explicitly mentioned in the current classificatory systems even though these symptoms can be classified under e.g. odd thinking or perceptual disturbance in criteria for schizotypal disorder in both ICD-10 and DSM-IV. The EASE is a semi-structured qualitative and semi-quantitative psychometric checklist to examine anomalies of

What exactly is the self? An entity floating on the surface of the soul? The substantial core of the subject? A grammatical illusion and a useful fiction, as F. Nietzsche puts it? The answer is by no means obvious. In contrast, it seems obvious that a good phenomenological description of the experience, whether pathological or not, supposes clear concepts of the subjective life such as intentionality, consciousness, embodiment, intersubjectivity, perception and so on. From this point of view, insofar as it can make these concepts explicit, phenomenology can be of some use to psychopathology. And vice versa. For madness or psychosis cannot fail to interest the phenomenologist insofar as it gives him the opportunity to put its concepts to the test. Among these concepts, one is particularly tricky: the concept of the self.

Therefore, our questioning can easily be formulated: what do we mean when we speak of the self? In response, it seems necessary, following the French phenomenologist J.-P. Sartre, to make a clear distinction between the self or the ego and the self as self-consciousness or what he calls the «for-itself». Then, in a second stage, we'll consider the self-consciousness as the minimal self and examine whether self-disorder like inserted thoughts calls into question the idea of a minimal or basic self. Our main thesis could be expressed as follow: strictly speaking, there is no self-disorder or self-disturbance.

1. The Ego and the For-Itself

At least for the pleasure, let's quote the great W. Shakespeare: «What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by. Richard loves Richard; that is, I am I. Is there a murderer here? No. Yes, I am». ³ Why this quotation? To point out that if, in this monologue from the play *The Tragedy of Richard the Third* (1592), the paranoid king uses the pronoun I and says: "I am I", he never uses the pronoun I as a noun.

subjective self-experience, published and available in *Psychopathology*. The EASE targets the disorders of subjective experience, which are characteristic of the schizophrenia spectrum disorders, especially in their early phases. The EASE instrument is inspired by philosophical phenomenology» [Parnas *et al.* 2005].

³ Shakespeare, *Richard the third*, Act. 5, Scene 5, lines 134-145.

In other words, he never speaks of *the* I or of *the* self.⁴ It is worth noting that Shakespeare's play dates back to the very end of the sixteenth century. It means that it takes place before what we can call, according to the French philosopher V. Carraud, the invention of *the* self or the invention of *the* ego [Carraud 2010]. Carraud's book has not been yet translated in English but, in the meantime, its main thesis can easily be summarized. It's about the pronoun *ego* in Latin, *I* in English, *Moi* in French, *ich* in German, which underwent a very important operation when used as a substantive. For the pronoun then becomes a noun. When R. Descartes writes in his *Discourse on the method*: «I think, therefore I am (*cogito ergo sum*)» or in the second of his *Metaphysical Meditations*: «I am, I exist», he uses the pronoun *I* as a pronoun. But when Descartes questions himself to know what he is and answers «I am a thinking thing» [Descartes 1901, 172],⁵ he opens the door to the nominalization of the pronoun, i.e. to seeing the ego or the self as a thing, as a substance. It is now possible to speak of the self as a reality distinct from the body and as the foundation of the individual's identity. For example, B. Pascal writes: «In a word, the self has two qualities: it is unjust in itself since it makes itself the center of everything; it is inconvenient to others since it would enslave them» [Pascal 1963, 584].⁶ Belongs also to this “egological turn” J. Locke who asserts in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*: «This every intelligent Being sensible of Happiness or Misery, must grant, that there is something that is *himself*, that he is concerned for, and would have happy; that this *self* has existed in a continued duration more than one instant» [Locke 1959, Book II, chapter XXVII, §25, 345]. But it is crucial to underline that before Descartes, philosophers never speak of the self as a substantive. The self is properly an invention of modernity,

⁴ The same remark could be made about God, when God said unto Moses: «I am that I am», Exode 3:14.

⁵ «But what, then, am I? A thing which thinks. What is a thing which thinks? It is a thing which doubts, understands, conceives, affirms, denies, wills, wills not, which also imagines, and feels» [Descartes 1901].

⁶ «En un mot le moi a deux qualités. Il est injuste en soi en ce qu'il se fait centre de tout. Il est incommode aux autres en ce qu'il les veut asservir » [Pascal 1963, fragments 597-455].

which finds its starting point in Descartes's *cogito* and runs modern philosophy until E. Husserl who, after I. Kant and J. G. Fichte, distinguishes between the empirical ego from the transcendental ego.⁷

The question is now whether there is something like an ego as a distinct entity, some kind of unchanging soul substance and the alleged basis of our identity [Romano 2022, 219].⁸ It would take too long to consider the arguments for and against, if only within phenomenology. Let us simply point out that this question has already been addressed by Nietzsche, who casts doubt on the reality of the ego when he analyses Descartes's sentence: «I think». In the chapter on «Prejudices of Philosophers», Nietzsche asks: «What gives me the right to speak of an "ego" and even of an "ego" as cause, and finally of an "ego" as cause of thought?» [Nietzsche 1997, §§16-19, 22-25].⁹ But, in our opinion, the strongest criticism comes from Sartre in his early and short essay, *The transcendence of the Ego* [Sartre 2011; Sartre 2018, 232].¹⁰ According

⁷ In fact, the distinction between the empirical self and the transcendental self in Husserlian phenomenology is linked to his transcendental turn and doesn't appear in Husserl's early texts like the *Logical Investigations*.

⁸ C. Romano convincingly establishes that the ego cannot be the real basis of identity and invites to abandon this notion [Romano 2022, 219].

⁹ «It is a perversion of the facts of the case to say that the subject "I" is the condition of the predicate "think". One thinks; but that this "one" is precisely the famous old "ego", is, to put it mildly, only a supposition, an assertion, and assuredly not an "immediate certainty". After all, one has even gone too far with this "one thinks" – even the "one" contains an interpretation of the process, and does not be-long to the process itself. One infers here according to the usual grammatical formula – "To think is an activity; every activity requires an agency that is active; consequently..." [ibid.].

¹⁰ Faithful to Husserl's *Logical Investigations* [1901] and contrary to *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* [1913] in which Husserl reintroduces the ego at the heart of the lived experience, Sartre asserts at the very beginning of his essay: «For most philosophers the ego is an "inhabitant" of consciousness. Some affirm its formal presence at the heart of *Erlebnisse* as an empty principle of unification. Others—psychologists for the most part—claim to discover its material presence, as the center of desires and acts, in each moment of our psychic life. We should like to show here that the ego is neither formally nor materially *in* consciousness, it is outside, in the world. It is a being of the world like the ego of another» [Sartre 2004, 1]. Here a difficulty arises: if the ego is outside, in the world, like any other object such as a tree by the roadside, the ego is, according to Sartre, the product of impure and constituting reflection, which is given first in the daily life. This means

to Sartre, the ego is not only superfluous but also damaging: superfluous for useless, damaging for it endangers the non-substantiality of consciousness. Moreover, from a rigorous and descriptive phenomenological point of view, the pre-reflective consciousness, unlike the reflective one, is egoless. For instance, when I am running after the tram, there is consciousness of the tram as a tram-to-be-reached and the consciousness, focused on its object, is egoless or without ego. But it doesn't mean that the concept of the self loses at the same time all relevance.

Following Husserl and his concept of intentionality, Sartre maintains that all consciousness is consciousness of something. But he adds, following again Husserl (and F. Brentano [Brentano 1974])¹¹ on this point, that positional consciousness of a chair or of a table is necessarily non-positional consciousness of itself [Miguens *et al.* 2016, 19]. Sartre specifies: «this is a necessary condition, for if my consciousness were not consciousness of being consciousness of the table [...] it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself, an unconscious – which is absurd» [Sartre 2018, 10]. However, this statement should not be understood as if consciousness of the table were at the same time an object of reflective consciousness. What is at stake is a non-reflective or pre-reflective consciousness. In this case, consciousness of consciousness is an immediate, non-cognitive relation of consciousness to itself, whereas the reflective consciousness is intentionally directed towards itself. In other words, pre-reflective consciousness is at one stroke perception of a table and consciousness of perception. Positional consciousness of something is necessarily non-positional consciousness (of) self [Sartre 2018, 12].¹²

that the ego and the psyche (“by psyche we means the ego, its states, its qualities and its acts”) are real psychological objects and as old as the reflective consciousness that engenders them. The question then becomes: how can we reconcile the historical ego-logical turn of the ego and the ahistorical transcendence of the ego? In other words, does Carraud's thesis not invalidate Sartre's? [Sartre 2011; Sartre 2018, 232].

¹¹ For Brentano all intentional consciousness is accompanied by inner pre-reflective consciousness and Brentano distinguishes inner consciousness, which is a matter only of accompanying the perception of an object (internal or external) and inner perception: consciousness turns to itself, becoming its own intentional object [Brentano 1974].

¹² About the brackets, Sartre writes: «The requirements of syntax here have obliged us until now to talk of “non-positional consciousness of self”. But we cannot go on using this expression, in which the phrase “of self” still evokes the idea of knowledge.

All these considerations may be well known and, if so, we apologize for repeating them. To conclude this first part, let's make a useful semantic observation. Sartre introduces in *Being and Nothingness* a new vocabulary and call this very first, immediate and elementary structure of the subjectivity the "for-itself" (pour-soi).¹³ Others would prefer perhaps to speak of ipseity or of selfhood. But it seems necessary to keep the Sartrian word for-itself and to distinguish for-itself and ipseity, even if these two words are sometimes used as synonyms. Because ipseity (or selfhood) is used in another way by phenomenologists such as M. Heidegger [Heidegger 2010, §64],¹⁴ P. Ricœur [Ricœur 1992], and their followers like Romano [Romano 2019]. For instance, ipseity can be the translation of the German and Heideggerian word *Selbstheit*, which has nothing to do with self-consciousness and the Sartrian for-itself. For Heidegger, ipseity or selfhood (*Selbstheit*) is the possibility of being oneself. The concept of ipseity is therefore linked to the problematic of authenticity, falling, thrownness and no longer to consciousness. Heidegger writes in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*: «the Dasein has a peculiar selfsameness with itself in the sense of selfhood (*Selbstheit*). It is in such a way that it is in a certain way its own, it has itself, and only on that account can it *lose* itself. Because selfhood belongs to existence, as in some manner "being-one's-own", the existent Dasein can *choose* itself on purpose determine its existence primarily and chiefly starting from that choice, that is, it can exist authentically» [Heidegger 1982, 170].

2. The For-Itself as Basic or Minimal Self

From this non-egological point of view, it is clear that the ego or the self as a distinct entity in the pre-reflective consciousness and as a foun-

(From now on we will put the "of" between brackets, to indicate that it answers only to a grammatical constraint)» [Sartre 2018, 12].

¹³ It seems better to speak of for-itself or self-presence rather than of for-me-ness. Because for-itself is neutral and impersonal whereas for-me-ness includes a first-person singular pronoun and therefore the distinction between me and you, me and the other subjects, which depends on the language.

¹⁴ «Selfhood is to be discerned existentially only in one's authentic potentiality-for-Being-one's-Self – that is to say, in the authenticity of Dasein's Being as care» [Heidegger 2010, §64, 369].

dation of the subject's identity doesn't exist. Of course, like Richard the third, we can keep using the pronoun I as well as the pronoun you or they. It would be very complicated not to. But when someone says I, the pronoun refers to the speaker as an individual and not to the I or to the ego as thinking thing. And now it is time to take a step forward and see whether the Sartrean concept of for-itself could be regarded as the real basic or minimal self and as the true, invariable, universal structure of consciousness, including pathological consciousness like psychotic consciousness. To put this proposal on a better footing, we can consider two objections.

The first one could be that the for-itself has no reality because it is an abstraction. This objection is legitimate and raises an issue within phenomenology itself. On the one hand, it can be said that the Sartrean for-itself corresponds, in M. Henry's phenomenology of life, to the central concept of self-affection, through which Henry emphasizes on the affective dimension of the relationship to oneself. From this point of view self-affection is the most concrete reality. But this attempt to connect Sartre's for-itself and Henry's self-affection quickly reaches its limits. For what Henry seeks is the invisible and non-intentional Life with a capital letter, which is absolutely distinct from the visible world and which is none other than God himself [Henry 1996; Serban 2024, 213].¹⁵ But, on the other hand, it can be said that the for-itself is nothing other than the very first and immediate structure of a complex and universal structure, which alone is real and includes also intentionality, temporality and the transcendence of a being that is a being-in-the-world. In this way, which is Sartre's way of thinking in *Being and Nothingness*, the truly concrete is the human being as a being-in-the-world and the for-itself is an abstraction as long as it is considered separately. Moreover, the for-itself should not be considered in a purely formal manner. Using the concept of coenesthesia as phenomenological concept, it is possible to give flesh or thickness to the minimal self [Fazakas 2023]. Far from being purely formal, the for-itself, according to Sartre, is inseparable of its body as body-for-itself. For consciousness, writes

¹⁵ In *C'est moi la vérité* [Henry 1996], Henry distinguishes between two types of self-affections: the first is absolute Life (God), the second the self-affection of individual life.

Sartre, does not cease “to have” a body and “a discreet and insurmountable nausea constantly reveal my body to my consciousness”, which belongs to the coenesthetic affectivity [Sartre 2018, 452].

The second objection is more important and can be expressed by this question: does not the phenomenological description of schizophrenia as self-disorder contradicts and discredits our assertion of the inalterable or invariable character of the for-itself as minimal self? As we shall try to show, it seems possible to conciliate these two statements: on the one hand, consciousness is necessarily self-consciousness or for-itself and, on the other hand, the fundamental disturbance or «*trouble générateur*» [Minkowski 1970] of schizophrenia is disturbance of the self. The difficulty is, as it often happens in philosophy, a question of vocabulary. First of all, the objection raises a crucial phenomenological question, which is often a point of disagreement or misunderstanding between philosophers and psychiatrists: can an eidetic structure be altered in any way? Strictly speaking, from a phenomenological point of view, it seems absurd to consider such a possibility. And abandon the eidetic perspective is to abandon phenomenology itself. In other words, unlike empirical description, phenomenology aims to reveal the eidetic structure, that is the essence of phenomena. Which means, when it comes to consciousness, that its eidetic structure as such cannot be removed or abolish. Even a delusional consciousness is an intentional self-consciousness of a being-in-the-world. And we might add that human being as a being-in-the-world is being in the same world as all the others. In other words, contrary to what is sometimes said, psychotics do not belong to another world, which would be a personal and unshared world. Strictly speaking, there is only one world [Boss 1980].¹⁶

Historically, this issue of a possible variation of the eidetic structure is a point of disagreement between L. Binswanger¹⁷ and M. Boss,¹⁸ the

¹⁶ As being in the world, psychotics, whether delusional or not, exist in a world that is the same for everyone, even if there are of course several ways of being-in-the-world, including pathological ways [Boss 1980, 113].

¹⁷ Director of the Bellevue Sanatorium in Kreuzlingen (Thurgau), founded in 1857 by his grandfather, L. Binswanger (1881-1966) was a Swiss psychiatrist and pioneer in the field of existential psychology.

¹⁸ M. Boss (1903-1990) was a Swiss psychoanalytic psychiatrist who developed a form of psychotherapy known as *Daseinsanalyse*, which united the psychotherapeutic

two Swiss psychiatrists who claim to be followers of Heidegger. Binswanger speaks of neurosis or psychosis as variations (*Abwandlungen*) of the structure of *Dasein* and in his «Introduction to *Schizophrenie*», he writes: «We have Martin Heidegger to thank for revealing to us the a priori of this ontological structure of the *Dasein*. Only since Heidegger is it possible to speak of a disorder in the ontological structure of the *Dasein* and to show of what it can consist, to show, that is, which elements are to be made responsible for the fact that a particular structural order, so to say, “denies”, that it exhibits gaps and that these gaps are filled again by the *Dasein*» [Binswanger 1968, 250]. But Boss, an orthodox disciple of Heidegger, responds that there can be no variation in the structure of the *Dasein* as revealed by Heidegger [Boss 1980, 113]. Not because Heidegger is Heidegger and above criticism, but because the structure of *Dasein* is the condition of possibility without which the existence is unconceivable and impossible. However, it doesn’t mean that this structure cannot manifest itself in different ways. For example, even if the anxiety is an existential, anxiety can be concealed, just as one can flee from it. As we shall see in a moment, the sense of mineness can be very problematic in certain forms of schizophrenia and can be disrupted. But the mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*) remains a fundamental characteristic of *Dasein* [Heidegger 2010, §9].¹⁹ The question is therefore to determine in what sense we can speak of «disorder in the ontological structure of the *Dasein*».

Second remark: when it comes to self-disorder in schizophrenia, it is important to specify the meaning of the self in this particular case. Does it concern actually the self as for-itself? Likely not. If that were the case, because self-consciousness or self-presence is the only possible mode of existence for any consciousness of something, self-disorder would be unconscious. But to understand what is at stake when we talk of self-disorder, let’s analyse the case of inserted thoughts, which often occurs in florid psychotic states. This case is of course very strange in that we generally have no doubt that we are the ones

practice of psychoanalysis with the existential phenomenological philosophy of friend and mentor Martin Heidegger.

¹⁹ «Because *Dasein* has in each case mineness, one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: “I am”, “you are”» [Heidegger 2010, §9].

thinking what we think. The error through misidentification relative to first-person pronoun seems impossible. When one uses I as in «I think my thoughts», she or he cannot possibly be referring to anyone else by saying I. However, for a person experiencing thought insertion, it is not just «I don't think my thoughts» but also «these thoughts that occur in my mind are not mine». Here is a very classic example: «I look out of the window and I think the garden looks nice and the grass looks cool, but the thoughts of E. Andrews come into my mind. There are no other thoughts there, only his... He treats my mind like a screen and flashes his thoughts on to it like you flash a picture» [Humpston 2019, 716].

We must notice that the patient doesn't recognize his thoughts as such but nevertheless says that Andrews' thoughts are—we quote again—«into my mind». It means that even if inserted thoughts are experienced as intrusive and strange, the patient remains aware that it is himself rather than somebody else who is experiencing these alien thoughts. If we want to describe this phenomenon better, we can use the distinction between ownership and agency. Agency refers to the sense that I am the one who is causing or generating an action, whereas ownership is defined by the sense that I am the one who is undergoing an experience [Feyaerts *et al.* 2024].²⁰ In case of inserted thoughts, the subject experiences that these thoughts that occur in his mind are not his thoughts. So, we can say that in case of inserted thoughts we are «dealing with a kind of self-alienation or alienated self-consciousness, but some dimension of self and self-consciousness remains preserved». In other words, while the for-itself remains intact, on the other hand, the mineness is disturbed insofar as the pathology calls into question the subject's relationship to his own thoughts [Zahavi 2019, 377].²¹

²⁰ The loss of ownership can be over thought but also over action or the body (e.g. moving one's arm). But, of course, this distinction between ownership and agency does not apply solely to schizophrenia. As a matter of fact, many of our ordinary or somewhat obsessional thoughts also come unbidden and without a sense of agency, simply crossing one's mind, and may even be experienced as imposed and intrusive; yet they do not carry the sense or quality of alienation that we see in schizophrenia. However, this objection doesn't concern the distinction itself but rather the possibility of comprehensively explaining the self-disorders in schizophrenia [Feyaerts 2024].

²¹ Even though our vocabulary (for-itself/mineness) is slightly different, we agree with Zahavi's conclusion: «One lesson to learn is that we might have to distinguish

3. Conclusion

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes: «*Dasein ist Mitsein*» [Heidegger 2010, §26]. It means that the relationship with others is ontologically constitutive of the human being as being-in-the-world. With this assertion, Heidegger seeks to overcome the pitfall of the Husserlian solipsism. But does this imply that the for-itself as basic structure of consciousness depends on intersubjectivity? For instance, in his text *Selfhood, Schizophrenia, and the Interpersonal Regulation of Experience*, R. Ratcliffe suggests that the minimal self has to be re-conceptualized in interpersonal terms [Ratcliffe 2017, 149-171; Zahavi 2017, 193-199]. Ratcliffe is certainly right to point out that the constitution of the subjective life depends on the other. In his time, K. Marx made a fool of the fascination with Robinson Crusoe and what he called the Robinsonade. But when it comes to consciousness, it would be absurd to consider the for-itself or self-consciousness as a result of an interpersonal or intersubjective constitution, which presupposes openness to the other and self-consciousness. If we may say so, that would be putting the cart before the horse.

To avoid any possible confusion, we have therefore to make clear that the for-itself has nothing to do with a social construct and with the narrative-self, addressed by Ricœur in *Oneself as Another* [Ricœur 1992]. The narrative-self concerns a less foundational level and presupposes of course the others and the language. On the contrary, the for-itself does not depend on intersubjective recognition or linguistic capacities. It's an innate, pre-conceptual and non-social structure of consciousness. In other words, the for-itself is a built-in feature of experiential life. We might add that if a fetus can experience pain or pleasure, which we don't know for sure, it must be conscious of suffering or

more carefully between two different phenomenological claims: a minimalist one and a more robust one. On the minimalist reading, the for-me-ness of experience simply refers to the subjectivity of experience, to the fact that the experiences are pre-reflectively self-conscious and thereby present in a distinctly subjective manner, a manner that is not available to anybody else. This feature is arguably retained in the pathological cases. On a slightly more robust reading, the for-me-ness of experience can refer to a sense of endorsement and self-familiarity. This feature can be disturbed and perhaps even be completely absent in certain forms of pathology» [Zahavi 2019, 377].

enjoying, it must be conscious of itself. Just like any animal insofar as it experiences pain or pleasure.

We can conclude by suggesting three distinctions:

1. (Because the patient, in the case of inserted thoughts, experiences his thoughts as generated by someone else, we must distinguish between for-itself and mineness.
2. (Because ipseity (*Selbstheit*) is linked to the concept of authenticity and the possibility of being oneself, we must distinguish for-itself and ipseity or selfhood.
3. (Finally, because narrative-self is a social construction, we must distinguish for-itself and the narrative-self. But the most important is to understand that the consciousness of anything is necessarily self-consciousness or for-itself and that is the minimal or basic self.

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Keywords

Minimal Self; For-Itself; Self-Disorders; Schizophrenia; Phenomenology

Abstract

It is said that the fundamental disturbance of schizophrenia is a disturbance of the self or a self-disorder. But what does it mean? To what extent can the self be altered? What is the self? To answer these questions, we must first get rid of the ego or the self as the substantial core of the subject. Thanks to Vincent Carraud, we know now that the ego as a noun is an invention of the philosophy, beginning with Descartes and continuing with Kant, Fichte and Husserl. Thank to Sartre's essay on the transcendence of the ego, the ego no longer appears as an inhabitant of consciousness and the self as such, unlike the ego, is the first and non-substantial structure of consciousness, called by Sartre the for-itself. This raises the question whether this fundamental structure could be altered in certain forms of madness. Our thesis could be expressed as follow: even in delusion, the consciousness remains an intentional self-consciousness and the human being a being-in-the world. This would therefore mean that, if there are disorders of subjective experience there is, strictly speaking, no possible self-disorder or self-disturbance in schizophrenia.

Si dice che il disturbo fondamentale della schizofrenia sia un disturbo del sé o un disordine del sé. Ma cosa significa? In che misura il sé può essere alterato? Che cos'è il sé? Per rispondere a queste domande, dobbiamo prima liberarci dell'ego o del sé come nucleo sostanziale del soggetto. Grazie a Vincent Carraud, ora sappiamo che l'ego come sostantivo è un'invenzione della filosofia, a partire da Cartesio e proseguendo con Kant, Fichte e Husserl. Grazie al saggio di Sartre sulla trascendenza dell'ego, l'ego non appare più come un abitante della coscienza e il sé in quanto tale, a differenza dell'ego, è la prima struttura non sostanziale della coscienza, chiamata da Sartre il per-sé. Ciò solleva la questione se questa struttura fondamentale possa essere alterata in alcune forme di follia. La nostra tesi potrebbe essere espressa come segue: anche nel delirio, la coscienza rimane una coscienza intenzionale di sé e l'essere umano un essere-nel-mondo. Ciò significherebbe quindi che, se esistono disturbi dell'esperienza soggettiva, non esiste, in senso stretto, alcun possibile disturbo o turbamento del sé nella schizofrenia.

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